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THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET
DISTRIBUTION.

[1](#)1. (SBU) This cable is the fourth in a series of elections
snapshots designed to provide a sense of the local
environment in the run up to the elections planned for April
[1](#)2007. In-depth information will continue to be reported in
septels, with the snapshot format being used to convey
interesting and pertinent anecdotes or facts. Post welcomes
any comments or suggestions.

TALLY OF CANDIDATES

[1](#)2. (SBU) As the February 3 deadline to withdraw candidates
and the February 13 deadline for their replacement
approaches, the leading political parties have held their
conventions, named their candidates and, in most cases,
selected vice presidential running mates. The list at
present is:

People's Democratic Party (PDP): Katsina Governor Umar Musa
Yar'Adua. Running mate is Bayelsa Governor Goodluck
Jonathan. The PDP announced the kick-off of their
presidential campaign will be January 27 in Lagos; however,
Yar'adua has already been making a series of appearances
around the country.

All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP): General Muhammadu Buhari.
Running mate is Chief Edwin Umeh Ezeoke (from the southwest),
current ANPP Chairman. Buhari's running mate is rumored to
be likely to change as negotiations continue. Two front
runners at the moment are John Nwodo, former Minister of
Information, and Ken Nnamani, current Senate President. In a
January 22 public statement, Buhari warned of a "crisis of
very serious proportions" if the April elections are marred
by rigging.

Action Congress (AC): Atiku Abubakar. Running mate is Chudi
Nwuke.

African Democratic Congress (ADC): Professor Pat Utomi

Alliance for Democracy (AD): Adebayo Adefarati

Democratic People's Party (DPP): Sokoto Governor Attahiru Bafarawa. Bafarawa will launch his campaign on January 24 in Kaduna. He later plans to travel to Enugu, Port Harcourt, and Lagos.

Progressive People's Alliance (PPA): Abia Governor Orji Uzor Kalu. Running mate is Mariya Baba

All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA): Odumegwu Ojukwu

National Democratic Party (NDP): Habu Fari

Fresh Democratic Party (FRESH): Reverend Chris Okotie

National Conscience Party (NCP): Osagie Obanuwa. Running mate is Yanusa Tanko

African Renaissance Party (ARP): Yahaya E. Ndu

Citizen Popular Party (CPP): Maxi Okwu

Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN): Mokisola Adekunle Obasanjo

Better Nigerian Progressive Party (BNPP): Iheanyi Godswill Nnaji

INEC AND VOTER REGISTRATION

13. (SBU) Media reports on January 23 indicate that the Villa
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is concerned by a move in the Senate to declare a vote of no confidence in Maurice Iwu's leadership of INEC. A two-thirds vote would theoretically compel President Obasanjo to remove Iwu from office, although there is speculation over whether the president would comply. The bill is sponsored by Senator Timothy Adudu of Plateau State.

14. (SBU) The Action Congress (AC) secured an injunction in Abuja High Court on January 22 preventing INEC from continuing its candidate verification exercise. If INEC honors the order, they would be prevented from issuing any statement saying that Atiku's legal troubles disqualify him from seeking the presidency. Atiku's campaign claims that this is the only purpose of the verification exercise, which has already screened and cleared PDP candidate Umaru Yar'adua. Other political parties and, in fact, state and local PDP candidates have also maintained INEC's screening of candidates is outside its mandate and authority. INEC continues to claim that its screening process is aimed at "verifying the validity of credentials;" however, no specifics have been given on what this means.

15. (SBU) Press reports indicate that two direct data capture machines were found in the home of former Chief of Staff to the former Oyo State Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala. The machines were allegedly being used to carry out duplicate registrations. Despite attempts to flee with the machines, three persons were arrested, including one INEC official, and the machines were recovered. The Oyo State INEC Resident Commissioner claimed to have no knowledge of how the machines ended up in a private residence on the opposite side of the state from their appointed site. The arrests were made by SSS, with local sources telling the press that calls to the police and INEC to alert them of the abuse were ignored.

16. (SBU) Kwara and Ekiti states both declared two work-free days during the week of January 22-26 in order to allow workers to register in larger numbers for the upcoming

elections.

ATIKU RETURNS - LONDON MEETING WITH BUHARI

17. (SBU) Vice President Atiku Abubakar returned to Abuja on January 21 following a month's vacation in the United States.

Press reports indicate that before returning to Abuja, Atiku met in London with ANPP candidate General Buhari to discuss a possible ANPP/AC alliance for the forthcoming elections. The GON prevented all but 20 of Atiku's supporters from meeting his plane as it landed in Abuja. Upon his return, the Vice President says is unable to return to his official residence and office because the President continues to deny him perks of the office such as security details and paid staff. Representatives of the presidency maintain that Atiku has simply chosen to stay away. The Supreme Court will hear the suit brought by Atiku, seeking to stop Obasanjo's attempts to remove him as Vice President, on January 25.

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